



Minutes for the CPC Meeting of Dec. 16, 2004, 7:30 pm-10:45 pm, Library Meeting Room

Attending:

Peter Berry, Walter Foster, Stacy Rogers, Bob Coan, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Catherine Coleman, Nancy Tavernier, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Andy Magee, Matt Lundberg, Roland Bartl

Audience:

John Ryder, Observer for FinCom, Anne Forbes, Observer for HDC, Jamie Eldridge, Dennis Ahearn, Will Twombly, Selina Oppenheim, Neil Saunders, Bob Millett, Megan Foley, Jane Shurtleff,....

Additional discussion about "Borrowing as Authorized by the CPA"

Town Treasurer, John Murray, would like to initiate holding a regional forum to discuss the borrowing issue. John explained the difference between General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds. GO bonds require each community to pledge its general tax base as the guarantor of any long term bond whereas revenue bonds are backed by the specific revenues of an activity such as the CPA.

See Dorrie Pizzella's memo of 12/13 to Peter Berry in which she explains that "it is a true and a deliberate feature of the CPA that CPA bonds are general obligations of the adopting municipality; and that there is no specific requirement in the law that debt service on CPA bonds must be paid off from CP proceeds", etc.

It was agreed to re-open this discussion at the CPC meeting of 1/13/05.

Public Comment:

Jamie Eldridge commented that the Governor and the MAPC wants to raid the CP Trust fund, and that he, Senator Resor, and State Rep. Atkins are organizing to stop the effort.

Walter added that the BoS wrote a letter to the MAPC that the Selectmen are concerned about the proposed raid, are withholding the town's dues to MAGIC in protest, and will ask others towns to do so.

Place Holder for Open Space:

Andy suggested adding a placeholder for Open Space Preservation of \$300,000 and a place holder for Administrative Expenses of \$50,000. It was agreed to do so.

Habitat for Humanity

(A large group of supporters were on hand)

Megan Foley, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity for this area, presented the proposal. (See the application for details).

Comments and questions from the CPC and replies from applicant, Megan Foley

It was asked if Habitat considered the Willow/Central lot. The answer was no as that lot is targeted for multifamily and Habitat focuses on single family housing.

It was asked about the breakdown in funding. Megan commented they draw from general funds if necessary. They will ask for \$35,000 from the CPA and \$35,000 from local donations. If CPA funds didn't come through this year, they would re-apply for funding next year.

To acquire land the list of town owned parcels was reviewed as was the tax title issue.

Habitat is considering two parcels, one on River St. and one on Carlisle Road. The River St. parcel has the benefit of meeting Smart Growth criteria; it is flat and sewerred. It was also commented that it was a gift, and an unencumbered lot.

- Land which is donated is subject to RFP and the Procurement Act. Title is transferred to Habitat.

- It was commented that Town Counsel will give the project "Yes" for eligibility subject to four recommendations, such as "a Town Meeting vote authorizing the disposition of a town-owned parcel of land for this purpose," etc. (See p 4-5 Town Counsel's memo, "Acton/CPA - Allowable Uses of CPA Funds for 2005 Appropriation.")

- It was asked about the nature of supervision of volunteers. Megan added that it is more than adequate.

- Bob Coan commented that there is a Habitat home in Littleton near Very Fine, and that he would be glad to show it to the Committee.

- It was asked about the Town Meeting process. Megan commented that the \$35,000 of requested CP funding either pays for the land or it goes toward construction costs. (Transferring land can be challenging as it requires a 2/3 vote).

- It was asked who was eligible for the home. Megan replied that the home is open to anyone in Mass.

- It was commented that the land question is a big issue. If the Warrant Article to purchase the land failed, \$35,000 would revert back.

It was asked if the land were acquired through Town Meeting, would Habitat fundraise the additional \$40,000, and what if it hadn't been raised by the completion date. Megan commented that it usually isn't an issue. - Construction should begin in '06; Habitat can fund raise before they get the land.

- To mitigate any voter concern re: the fundraising part, it was suggested to have a certain amount fundraised before Town Meeting.

- It was commented that the Selectmen's support is deep.

- It was asked if they had spoken with the Planning Board. As they had not, it was recommended that they should in case they might have donations of land, etc.

Public Comment:

- James X, commented that he has volunteered with Habitat for 10 years and has worked on houses in Groton and Fitchburg and he is impressed by their high quality leadership.

- Anne Forbes learned from Megan that the River St. parcel is in the S. Acton Historic District and pointed out that Megan/Habitat will need to speak with the HDC about design, etc.

- It was commented that if it were necessary for Habitat to raise the full \$78,000 to cover expenses that Habitat would do so.

- Selina Oppenheim added that she is a big supporter and would like to see a project in Acton as it creates an opportunity to get children involved and the parents would benefit as well.

- Neil Saunders, Chair of the Social Action Committee for the Stow/Acton UU church, commented that his committee has supported Habitat for years and worked on homes in Groton and Fitchburg and would like to work in Acton.

- Bob Millett commented that he has helped Habitat in Groton, and he was amazed at the ability of the project supervisor to educate people to work.

- Barbara Smith of Charter Rd. commented that all religious organizations support Habitat and give annually out of their church treasuries.

Library Restoration of Civil War Artifacts

Representing this group were Tom Dunn, Dennis Ahearn, Will Twombly, and Marcia Rich

(See the application for details about the proposal).

Comments and questions from the CPC and replies from the applicants

- It was commented that the walk way area between the alcoves seemed cramped. Will replied that the exhibit plan is flexible; it's a system made of modular units. The entire display won't be displayed at once; it will be rotated.
- It was asked what the status was of last year's flag restoration project. Tom commented that he expects it to be finished in March and to get some publicity for it. They might be able to display the flag at Town Meeting.
- It was commented that the Library Trust Fund contributed \$4000 toward the project and that it's important to have that contribution.
- It was asked how tight the budget is. Tom and Will replied that they are quite comfortable with it.
- Re: the Public Bid law, Dean Charter will help them through the procurement process.
- It was pointed out that exhibits of these artifacts will attract notice from families of other veterans who will want to give the town more artifacts. -
- It was asked if the framing and matting aspect for the budget was underfunded at \$500. Will explained only original material would be framed which will keep the cost down.
- It was asked about the start and completion time. Tom replied that they expect to begin asap and expect it will be finished in one year or less.
- It was suggested that when a sign is made to describe the flag restoration project, credit should be given to CPA funding.
- Re: the \$4000 contribution from the Trustees, Tom commented that he hopes to encourage descendants to make a contribution in their will.
- Bob Coan commented that he has seen Will's work in Nahant, and was impressed.
- When asked about re-opening the front entrance of the original library, it was replied that it would be too expensive, requiring handicap accessible ramp, HDC approval, staffing and signage.
- It was asked if there would be a display case on the first floor. It was replied that one would probably be on the second floor and that other artifacts would be displayed in various locations in the library. Also, there will be signage.
- It was asked if any grants are available. Tom replied that twice they tried to get an NEH grant and that additional funds from the Friends of the Library must be used to support all the libraries, new computers, etc.
- It was asked if they had prioritized what they could omit from the budget if they didn't get full funding. Tom replied that he hasn't considered that, but it would depend on how much was cut.
- It was reiterated that it would be great to have the 5x6 restored flag for advertising at Town Meeting.

Public Comments:

John Ryder commented that it would be great to have photos and a catalogue on the web so that children can access it on the world wide web.

- It was suggested that there are two copy machines in Town Hall that may be used to make image files that can be emailed to Marcia Rich.

Pine Hawk Curatorial Display

Doug Halley, Director of the Acton Board of Health, presented the proposal. (See the application for details).

Comments and questions from the CPC and replies from Doug Halley

- It was asked if there are other sources for matching funds to offset the cost of the project. Doug replied that the Friends will try to find some.
- It was asked why the Director of the BoH was involved. Doug pointed out that as part of the sewer project the town was required to conduct an archeological investigation of areas the project would disturb using federal and state funds.
- It was asked how the project would be affected if it weren't funded this year, to which Doug replied that they would continue to re-apply.
- It was asked if doing this project would have a ripple effect in terms of encouraging archeological assessments in advance of new developments. Doug

agreed that not enough is done in that area. In this case MEPA triggered the assessment.

- It was asked if additional space will be needed to house future artifacts. Doug replied that additional materials will be rotated in.

- It was asked if there will be an educational component. Doug replied that currently he speaks about Pine Hawk to some 6th grade classes each year, and that he plans to expand this effort to other schools and classes.

- It was asked how solid the budget is. Doug replied that the numbers are from the Public Archaeology Lab (PAL).

- It was asked how many artifacts exist. Doug replied there are 3 dozen significant artifacts and 1000 chips; pictures of fire pits and tent holes.

- It was asked who PAL is. Doug replied that PAL is a non-profit housed at Brown Univ. PAL or someone else may be hired to do the work depending on the outcome of the RFP.

- The Committee was reminded that this is a town project which has been vetted and supported for some time.

- It was mentioned that the first item in the budget, "Pre-Project Publicity" may not be eligible, but that it can be earmarked

Public Comments:

Anne Forbes commented that the Historic Survey, which was funded the first round, is underway. It will identify and bring to people's attention above ground structures. The final report in the survey can make a recommendation for further study of the artifacts and recommend next steps which could be an archeological Master Plan for the town - to identify sensitive archeological areas in advance of development.

It was suggested that a letter from the Historical Commission recommending this project would be helpful.

Community Housing Program Fund

Nancy explained the difference between the Acton Housing Authority and the Acton Community Housing Corporation (see handout for details).

Nancy explained the nature of the proposal. (See the application for details about the proposal).

Nancy explained the process of "buying down" a house or condominium unit and why the condo fee is an issue.

Nancy updated the committee on the Willow/Central multi-family housing project: They have begun work on Willow/Central. It will hold 4 units, a total of 12 bedrooms; it met with neighborhood approval. Three units will count as affordable. The design has gone out to bid.

Comments and questions from the CPC and replies from Nancy Tavernier

- It was commented that the fund is not just for the ACHC; that the fund is earmarked for appropriate affordable housing activities recommended by the ACHC or any other entity approved by the BoS.

- Because the fund is earmarked it cannot be used to create another trust fund.

- It was commented that the ACHC doesn't have to go to the Selectmen.

Consideration of Proposal for Town Character Research

It was commented that the application was incomplete, and it would be helpful for the applicant to receive a copy of Town Counsel's comments.

ACTION: Peter Berry volunteered to contact the applicant.

- A question was raised as to if there were a constituency for this proposal as none was noted in the application.
- The committee felt that what the applicant has in mind (which is not stated explicitly) is ineligible for CPA funding.
- It was suggested that the applicant participate in the Master Planning process.

Next Meetings:

January 6, 2005, four proposals will be presented.

January 13, 2005

Respectfully submitted by:

Susan Mitchell-Hardt